

U.S. Embassy Muscat

Webchat on Student Visas, February 26, 2012

Walaa (IRC Director): Good morning, everyone! Thank you for joining us this morning. My name is Walaa and I am the Information Resource Center Director here at the U.S. Embassy. I am pleased to introduce our Vice Consul, Christian, who is here to answer any questions you may have on student visas to the U.S.

Question: I want to get any course regarding my studying in HRM in the U.S.

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Safia, do you mean Human Resources Management? If so, AMIDEAST Oman offers free educational advising services through the U.S. State Department EducationUSA network. Information can be found here:
<http://www.amideast.org/oman/advising/educationusa-free-advising-services>

Question: Thanks a lot.

Question: Dear sir, is there any chance for a scholarship from the U.S. embassy to send someone to the USA to study?

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Ahmed, please see my previous response to Mr. Salim regarding scholarships to study in the U.S.

Question: Thank you for your efforts to communicate information useful to get all the details about study in the U.S.

Christian (Vice Consul): You are welcome. I look forward to answering your questions.

Question: My question is how can I get a free scholarship?

Christian (Vice Consul): The Fulbright Scholarship program is one of our most prominent scholarship programs for graduate study in the U.S. You can find out more information about the Fulbright at http://oman.usembassy.gov/educational-exchange/flbrit_stdnt.html. Also, we have a number of short-term exchange programs, such as the NESI Undergraduate and Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI). You can find more information about those programs here: <http://oman.usembassy.gov/educational-exchange.html>

Christian (Vice Consul): Also, AMIDEAST Oman offers free educational advising services through the U.S. State Department EducationUSA network. Information can be found here:
<http://www.amideast.org/oman/advising/educationusa-free-advising-services>

Question: I waited almost three months for my visa because of the process.

Christian (Vice Consul): Moayid, I apologize for any inconvenience. Sometimes certain visa applications take longer to process than others. Because of this, we encourage everyone to apply as early as possible.

Question: Is there any chance to go through that again on my academic visa?

Christian (Vice Consul): There is a possibility that administrative processing will happen with every application. We encourage you to apply as early as possible for your academic visa, as well as any other visas you plan on applying for.

Question: Thank you Walaa. I'd like to ask about visa requirements for a CPA exam, and master's studies in the U.S.?

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Hany, the visa requirements for a CPA exam and masters studies are different. If you plan on traveling to the U.S. for the CPA exam, that would be a business/tourism trip. This kind of trip requires a B1/B2 visa. In order to study for master's degree in the U.S., you need an F1 visa. Requirements for all visa types can be found on our U.S. Embassy Muscat website.

Question: I want to live in the U.S.

Christian (Vice Consul): Mr. Salim, the Immigrant Visa process is different than the non-immigrant student visa process. Students can only live in the U.S. for the duration of their studies.

Question: Hi, I have a question. I'm currently studying in the United States and my visa has expired, but my I20 is still good/active until my graduation. Is there any way I can apply for a new visa from here (the U.S.) instead of going back to Oman to apply?

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Faris, your school's Office of International Students should be able to help you. As long as your I20 is still valid, you should be able to continue studying in the U.S. However, when you exit the U.S. you will need a new visa to return there.

Christian (Vice Consul): As long as you have your valid I20 and are in good standing with your university, you should be able to apply at any U.S. Embassy or Consulate worldwide.

Question: I'm a Senior Auditor in a group of companies in Muscat, and willing to apply to a ranked business school in the U.S. for an MBA, and to write the CPA exam as well. So are there any special requirements from my job, financial documents, etc.?

Christian (Vice Consul): Hany, for all visa categories it's best to arrive with supporting documentation that best supports and/or explains your purpose of travel and how you intend to fund it.

Question: Ok, if I started my academic studies can I stay with my language visa until it expires, then apply for my academic study visa after that?

Christian (Vice Consul): You can stay in the U.S. until the date of expiration on your I20. If you would like to continue your studies, you must apply to your intended school of study and get a new I20 from them. The Office of International Students at your school should be able to help you with this process.

Question: So I can apply for a new visa from the U.S., without going back to Oman?

Christian (Vice Consul): Faris, you cannot get a visa in the U.S. Once you arrive in the U.S. for the first time to study, you can stay for the full duration of your studies. If you leave during that time you will need to apply for a new visa before you can return to the U.S.

Question: Ok, what about if I got my new I20 but my visa is still valid, do I have to come back and change it or should I just stay until it expires?

Christian (Vice Consul): Before your first time traveling to the U.S. as a student, the name of the school on your visa must match your valid I20. But, if you are in the U.S. and change schools, you can contact the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or your Office of International Students to regularize your paperwork.

Question: Alright, thanks.

Question: I want to go to school in the U.S. I know I need a visa. But I do not know this I20 you talk of. What is the I20?

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Zahra, an I20 is a document from your school saying you have been admitted. It also says what program you will be studying, how long the program is expected to take, and how much it will cost. It will also mention who is paying for your studies. You must bring this document with you when you apply for your visa.

Question: Thanks for this helpful information.

Christian (Vice Consul): You are very welcome!

Question: Hi, I am planning to go the U.S. to study Certified Public Accounting (CPA) but I do not know anything about the study there. And the application I have to file. Or any requirement.

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Hassan, AMIDEAST Oman offers free educational advising services through the U.S. State Department EducationUSA network. Information can be found here: <http://www.amideast.org/oman/advising/educationusa-free-advising-services>

Christian (Vice Consul): Please feel free to contact them with any questions about CPA exams and programs in the U.S.

Question: What if I fail my class or I don't go to all my classes?

Christian (Vice Consul): Zahra, students are normally admitted for the duration of their program. If you fail your classes or don't attend regularly you will lose your student status and begin acquiring illegal presence status while in the U.S. Any illegal presence in the U.S. could make it harder for you to get a visa in the future. So please study hard!

Question: Ok thanks.

Walaa (IRC Director): Hassan, AMIDEAST's office is located in AlQurum near alQurum Park. Their phone number is 968 2456-1727. You can also go there during their office hours: Saturday - Wednesday 8:00 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Question: I hear getting a visa is very hard from the American embassy. How do I get a visa?

Christian (Vice Consul): Zahra, you must first be admitted to a school in the U.S. Then you fill out an application, called a CEAC, from the U.S. Embassy Muscat website:
<http://oman.usembassy.gov/student.html>

Christian (Vice Consul): Then, make an appointment to come in for your interview. The website will provide you with information regarding what you will need to take with you to the interview.

Question: I am Indian residing with my family in Oman. Can I apply for my student visa in Oman or do I have to obtain it from India? Thanks.

Christian (Vice Consul): Hi Fatima, as long as you can show strong social and financial ties to Oman, you can apply here.

Question: What do you mean by social and economic ties?

Christian (Vice Consul): Good question! You must prove to the interviewing officer that you would return to Oman after your studies. For example, if you were born in Oman or if you have been living in Oman for most of your life that gives you strong social ties. Financial ties might include you or your family's strong ties to continued employment in Oman.

Christian (Vice Consul): Also, you must provide the interviewing officer with the bank account from whoever is paying for your studies that shows enough to pay for the first year of school. But, if you have a scholarship, you must provide proof of that as well.

Walaa (IRC Director): As we are approaching the end of our webchat for today, we would like to thank all of you for logging in and asking questions! We'll have another webchat about consular issues on Sunday, March 18. Please let your friends and colleagues know that we will be more than happy to answer your questions. In the meantime, if you have questions and would like to contact the consular section, please feel free to email them at ConsularMuscat@State.gov. We look forward to seeing you next month! Have a pleasant day!

Christian (Vice Consul): Goodbye, everyone! Thank you for your participation!